



Business Characteristics Survey Consultation

Closed 11 Oct 2024

Opened 20 Aug 2024

Contact

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Feedback updated 18 Dec 2024

We asked

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) consulted with users of the Business Characteristics Survey (BCS) to receive feedback on proposed changes to survey content and the frequency of the survey.

BCS currently publishes data annually under two separate releases: *Innovation in Australian Business* (8158.0) and *Characteristics of Australian Business* (8167.0). Each release contains estimates of key business characteristics along with an alternating annual release of detailed information on the business use of information and communication technologies, or on innovation related activities.

From 2024-25 the collection will move to a biennial frequency. A public consultation was held from 20 August to 11 October 2024 to gather comments on the proposed design of BCS and an understanding of user data requirements.

You said

The consultation highlighted the importance of BCS data in policy and planning activities by government agencies, as well as for academic research by other users. Feedback from users indicated the importance of BCS in capturing data on new or emerging areas of interest to provide insights into business

characteristics, performance, productivity and growth analysis.

Common themes emerging from the consultation included:

- Strong support for the retention of content on innovation activities, business use of ICT, and data on business finance and general characteristics.
- Strong interest in data on business cyber security incidents and measures, and capturing data on business use of clean technologies.
- The need for data to be published at a range of levels, including employment size, industry, region, and/or innovation status.
- The importance of BCS data in the Business Longitudinal Analysis Data Environment (BLADE) to enable microdata analysis and the need to maintain the BCS time series as much as possible.
- Support for the survey content from both releases to be combined into one survey, and continued publication of the same level of detail, where possible.
- Interest in capturing data on supply chains and reasons why businesses seek finance.
- The need to retain content where there are no alternative data sources available.
- A preference for the survey to include a supplementary module of questions to capture data in response to emerging trends or technological advances.
- Support for the ABS to engage with users on potential future topics that could be included in the survey.

Feedback was also received that is beyond the scope of the current BCS collection. This feedback will be evaluated for potential integration in future, including considerations of suggested new topics for inclusion as core content or part of a modular suite.

We did

Stakeholder consultation has been pivotal in shaping the design of the biennial BCS. As a result of the feedback, the ABS will

1. Combine important content from the *Characteristics of Australian Business* and the *Innovation in Australian Business* surveys into one collection. Data will be collected and published every two years.
2. Design the survey with an option of a small, flexible modular component to capture data on emerging areas of interest or to meet point-in-time data needs.
3. Continue to publish high quality data by employment size, industry, state/territory, and location, where appropriate.
4. Continue to support microdata analyses in BLADE through the provision of

high-quality data files following each BCS cycle.

5. Continue to offer services to respond to data needs through data consultancies on request.
6. Investigate options to address data gaps relating to supply chains, business finance, and management capabilities.

Next steps

Over the next four months the ABS will design and develop the new biennial collection, including field testing to ensure the survey continues to collect high quality data on business characteristics, business use of ICTs, and innovation activities of Australian businesses.

Overview

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) is consulting with users of the Business Characteristics Survey to receive feedback on proposed changes. The survey currently publishes data under the following releases:

- [Innovation in Australian Business](#)
- [Characteristics of Australian Business](#)

Each release contains estimates of key business characteristics, such as business performance, along with an alternating annual release of detailed information on the use of digital technologies, or detailed information on innovation related activities.

From 2024-25 the collection will move to a biennial frequency, that is, data will be collected and published every two years, rather than annually.

We are reviewing the data collected under the survey, as well as published content, to ensure we can continue to provide high quality business characteristics data that is important to users, on a biennial frequency.

Before commencing the Consultation Survey, we encourage you to download a copy of both surveys that comprise the Business Characteristics Survey collection, as they may be of assistance as you navigate through the Consultation Survey. You will find these materials in the 'Related' section below.

Most of the questions in this Consultation Survey are optional, allowing you to progress through to the Topics that are of interest to you. However, we are keen to understand how important some of our data is and we encourage you

to provide further information to help us understand how you use the data and what the impact may be if we were to no longer collect or publish some data items.

Why your views matter

Your feedback helps us make changes that ensure our statistical releases deliver high quality and timely data. The questionnaire asks about your use of the core topics collected on the survey, how important they are to you or your organisation, and any suggestions on future content.

The ABS will use your feedback to inform the redesign of the Business Characteristics Survey and publication content.

Related

 [Collection Notice - Business Characteristics Survey Consultation](#)

99.4 KB (PDF document)

 [Downloadable copy of BCS Consultation Survey questionnaire](#)

114.6 KB (Office Word 2007 XML document)

 [Sample copy of survey form - Digital Activity module](#)

726.0 KB (PDF document)

 [Sample copy of survey form - Innovation Module](#)

644.2 KB (PDF document)

 [Innovation in Australian Business, 2022-23 release](#)

 [Characteristics of Australian Business, 2021-22 release](#)

Audiences

[Data Users](#) [General Public](#) [Stakeholders](#)

Interests

[Industry](#)

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